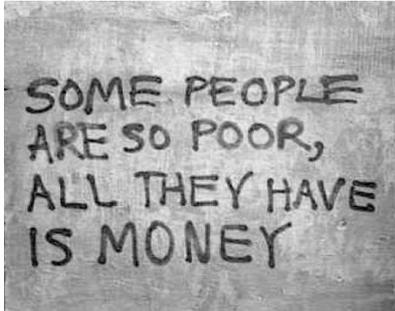


SUNDAY REFLECTION—24 August 2019 18th Sunday of ORDINARY TIME

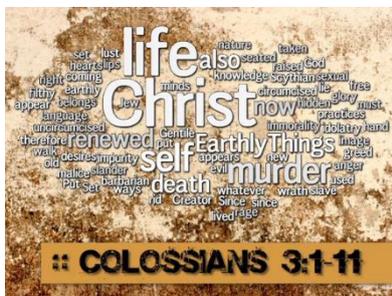


Lk 10:25-37

A man in the crowd said to Jesus, “Master, tell my brother to give me a share of our inheritance.” “My friend”

he replied, “who appointed me your judge or the arbitrator of your claims?” Then he said to them, “Watch and be on your guard against avarice of any kind, for a man’s life is not made secure buy that he owns, even when he has more than he needs.” Then he told them a parable: “There was once a rich man who, having had a good harvest from his land, thought to himself, ‘What am I to do? I have not enough room to store my crops’. Then he said “This is what I will do: I will pull down my barns and build bigger ones, and store all my grain and my goods in them, and I will say to my soul: My soul, you have plenty of good things laid by for many years to come; take things easy, eat, drink, have a good time.” But God said to him ‘Fool! This very night the demand will be made for your soul: and this hoard of yours, whose will it be then? So it is when man stores up treasure for himself in place of making himself rich in the sight of God.

REFLECTION



All through life we are faced with the question, ‘Which god will I follow?’

This is not about choosing to be a Catholic or Protestant, Christian or Buddhist, Hindu or Muslim. No, its recognizing that many things in life compete for our attention and make demands on our soul. In the unfolding of our lives we

continually ask of God’s creation more than it can be. We regularly pour our heart’s desire into some part of God’s creation and ask it to be GOD for us. We ask some part of God’s creation to be uncreated; we take a GOOD and ask it to be GOD.

This is the point of this Gospel story. The farmer has been seduced by the promise of “plenty” and “wealth”. Plenty and wealth are a GOOD but this farmer has asked them to be GOD for him. On his journey through life, the farmer has settled down with his wealth and refused to go on. He has settled down with a lesser god; it gives him some peace, some identity, some joy, some security. But Jesus is quick to point out what we all know but find hard to internalize – and that is that when you ask a created thing to be GOD, it will eventually crumble under the expectation This short-term solution masks a spiritual problem.

There are lesser gods that are obvious; power, career, addictions, violence. These are easy to identify; and while mostly they are not evil in themselves, yet we know that unless used in the pursuit of love, they will eventually demand a person’s soul.

And so in our personal lives we have to continually ask: What are the idols, the non-negotiables that have become part of my life? What are those things without which I cannot go on? Am I hurting them by clinging so tightly to them? Where have I become unfree in my life.

But as good citizens, bearing the Gospel of Good News to the Poor, Freedom to Captives and joy to those in sorrow, we can ask the same of our world. For example, has the world become so addicted to corporate success that it has become a god? To care about the National Interest of Australia’ is good but when it becomes a god we end up with divisive relationships with other nations and detain people in detention centres.

Both individually and nationally we can be deceived by the short-term attraction of lesser gods and mistake them for God.

The hungers of the heart send us into the world seeking nourishment. In many ways we say to each thing "Will you satisfy my hunger?" Our heart finds itself scattered everywhere as we ask each person and possession and each activity to tell us more about the Mystery at the core of our lives.

Prayer of the Faithful

1. That National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day (August 4) be an opportunity for all Australians to show support for Aboriginal children, as well as learn about the crucial impact that community, culture and family play in their lives, we pray:

2. That political leaders seek above all the value of dialogue and negotiation in the struggle with terrorism, rather than adding further violence, destruction and abuse of human dignity and rights, we pray:

3. That we as individuals and nations Be mindful of our responsibilities to look and act beyond our immediate needs and borders as we face the oppression and suffering of peoples in the Pacific, Asia, Latin America and Africa, we pray:

4. That we be mindful of our common humanity, not only as we commemorate Hiroshima Day and Nagasaki Day, and join all peoples to work together for the elimination of nuclear weapons and other threats to the earth, but seek to address the harmful effects on people of such weapons in the past, we pray:

God, sometimes I don't know what to seek.

God, sometimes I find myself trying to seek everything.

God, I want justice for the impoverished.

God, I want food for the hungry.

God, I want hospitality for refugees.

God, I want equality for all women.

God, I want good education for all of your children.

God, I want an end to the war in Iraq.

God, I want an end to terrorism.

God, I want peace and nonviolence to be the way everywhere.

God, I want everyone to get good health care.

God, I want an end to the death penalty.

God, I want an end to all crime.

God, I want justice in the marketplace.

God, I want universal respect for the environment.

God, I want an end to rape and sexual abuse.

God, I want an end to all that violates the sacredness of life.

God, I want the courage to act for justice.

God, I want it all!

God, help us to do what is right.

God, help us to be a community of justice and peace.

God, help us all. Amen.

